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## Towards a New Account of Interpreting: Levinson's Heuristics in the Interpretation of Press Conferences

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### Abstract

This study refers to interpretation as a speedy and effortless process through Levinson's utterance-type-meaning (1995, 2000). It applies Levinson's heuristics (Q, I and M) to warrant the message accuracy and trigger the utterance meaning and function in more immediate and stereotypical manner. The heuristics were applied to the interpretation of a number of press conferences between Arabic and English. The heuristics as pragmatic principles of communication assist interpreters to produce a message that is most consistent with the speaker's knowledge of the world or what s/he believes to be true, expand and compress the TM's components as allocated in the SM, and communicate any reiterative, emotive, and persuasive functions through a similar level of markedness.

**Key words:** Interpretation; Levinson's heuristics; Communication; Implicature; Press conferences

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### INTRODUCTION

This study postulates that interpretation is an automatic and immediate decoding of meaning, particularly in contexts like international gatherings given the load of cognitive processing due to time constraints (Gillies, 2014). Though Levinson's account was criticized as

"less flexible" (Bezuidenhout, 2002), and "questioned" in connection to the demanding cognitive processing of human communication in contrast to other accounts like RT (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) (cf. De Neys & Schaeken, 2007; Bott & Noveck, 2004; Noveck, 2001; Noveck & Posada, 2003; Papafragou & Musolino, 2003), I still believe that it can bring some interesting insights into interpretation through the notions of presumptive meaning and communication heuristics. In this paper, I will explain interpretation as an act of communication following Levinson's heuristics of communication (1995, 2000). The new account guides the interpreter to the best strategy to achieve communication with a higher level of immediacy, and lower degree of meaning and function loss. This research will consider Levinson's heuristics in the interpretation of press conferences as a case of sensitive texts. If we consider these heuristics as part of Levinson's theory of presumptive meaning (section two), that will allow us to look empirically at these heuristics with examples from press conferences interpreted between Arabic and English (section three).

### 1. NEO-GRICEAN IMPLICATURE

What makes communication possible, Grice (1975) suggested, is a set of rules in form of a cooperative principle and a number of maxims (quantity, quality, relevance and manner). The cooperative principle assumes that communication is achieved when interlocutors contribute to conversation as required following the context and purpose of communication (Grice, 1975). The neo-Gricean account is reductionist in principle; that is, according to Chapman (2011), it tries to do the work of Grice's theory of conversation, and at the same time bring the number of principles to the minimum to create a less complex and more motivated pragmatic framework.

Levinson (1995, 2000) proposed "a three-tiered theory of communication" (Huang, 2012, p.40) to understand

what is in the middle between a speaker meaning and sentence meaning. As an intermediary level of communication between conversational implicature that is context bound and propositional meaning, Levinson (1995, 2000) proposed “the utterance type meaning” as more automatic, conventional and stereotypical. His theory provides default heuristics as “frameworks of assumption that can be taken to amplify the coded content of messages in predictable ways” (Levinson, 1995, p.96). Based on his presumption that human communication is speedy, effortless and efficient, Levinson (1995) suggests a number of heuristics. Such heuristics are default; that is according to him (1995, p.96), “they are applied unless there are explicit indications (in the nature of the context or the content of the message) that they should not be”. The three heuristics are Quantity (Q-Heuristic), Informativeness (I-Heuristic) and Manner (M-Heuristic).

### 1.1 Q1: (Q-Heuristic)

Speakers and hearers according to Levinson (1995) presume that each other know that they should use this principle of communication; therefore, not everything they mean should be said. The speaker cannot make a statement informationally weaker than his knowledge of the world allows. The hearer, on the other hand, assumes that the speaker has made the strongest statement consistent with what he knows (cf. Bezuidenhout, 2002). For example, in the utterance ‘the flag is white’, the speaker implicates that the flag is only white, not red or blue. The Q-Heuristic is based on the contrast between sets of expressions that produce inferences of negative or complementary nature. The scalar pair “all” and “some” for example, has strong and weak forms. The strong form ‘all’ entails the weak form “some”. Consider the following example:

- (a) All of the students were in class.
- (b) Some of the students were in class.

“All of the students were in class” entails that “some of the students were in class”, and not vice versa. The hearer in (a) infers that the speaker’s utterance is not informationally weaker than his/her knowledge of the world; therefore the hearer’s interpretation should be consistent with this assumption. So if the speaker implicates (b), the hearer should presume that the speaker should have said so. The entailment could apply to other cases as “and/or”, “since/if”, lexical items, such as “hot and warm”, modal adjectives such as “necessary and possible”, or even morphemes with certain grammatical meaning, such as the definite article “the” and the indefinite article “a” (Levinson, 1995).

### 1.2 The I-Heuristic

The I-Heuristic (I for informativeness, from Atlas and Levinson, 1981) minimizes what the speaker says when the hearer is able to expand the informational content of

the speaker’s utterance. The hearer, on the other hand, amplifies or enriches the informational content of the speaker’s utterance up to the point where the hearer can figure out the speaker’s intention (cf. Bezuidenhout, 2002). This heuristic relates to Grice’s second maxim of Quantity; it “takes us from the more general utterance to the most specific, most informative default interpretation” (Briner, 2003, p.83). According to this principle, the default interpretation of the utterance meaning comes primarily from the conventional and stereotypical state of the utterance itself. In the example “there’s a blue pyramid on the red cube” (Levinson, 2000), the utterance implies a direct contact between the cube and the surface where it is placed primarily through the preposition “on”. In another example by Levinson (2000), if I say “he opened the door”, he then opened the door in the normal or conventional way as everybody expects, not by using “crowbar or dynamite”. However, if the utterance were “he turned the handle and pushed open the door” then we imply then that it was not in the conventional or normal manner, but rather in a non-stereotypical manner. The last example suggests meanings like he opened the door with “extra speed or force”. The I-Heuristic assumes default and stereotypical interpretations to narrow down inferences (Riemer, 2015). For example, according to Levinson (1995), “kitchen knife” is assumed to be used in kitchen, not for cutting kitchen, “bread knives” are not made of bread, but for cutting bread, “steel knives” however are made of steel, not for cutting steal, “army knives” are used by the army, not for cutting army. All such cases are of “presumptive interpretation” that tries to compute meaning in “the most general fashion” (Levinson, 1995, p.100).

### 1.3 The M-heuristic

The third heuristic (M-Heuristic) counteracts the second (I-Heuristic). To the speaker, this heuristic enjoins him/her to use marked expressions to draw the hearer’s attention to something unusual or unexpected in the situation. To the hearer, it guides him/her to arrive at the interpretation as intended (cf. Bezuidenhout, 2002). This principle draws on Grice’s maxim of manner, particularly, “be perspicuous”, “avoid obscurity of expression” and “avoid prolixity”. If the second maxim implies default and stereotypical interpretation, the third one is counterfactual; that is, it suggests that stereotypical interpretations be avoided (Levinson, 2000). The choice of more ambiguous forms or elaborate constructions is intentional. Following our presumption that humans are rational beings; that is they make choices for a reason (Thomas, 1983); therefore the speaker tries to communicate something as less expected and more marked. The choice of double negatives for example as in “he is not unpredictable” implies not only the positive form “he is predictable”, but rather, he is predictable in a different way. Levinson (1995) suggests a number of examples to explain this heuristic.

The word “drink” in the utterance “I had a drink” is unmarked. Stereotypically, following the second heuristic, this implies alcoholic drink. The word “beverage” on the other hand when used in the same utterance is rather marked; it suggests a non-alcoholic drink. The utterance “John could solve the problem” is unmarked. Again using the second heuristic, it implies that he did. However, the utterance “John was able to solve the problem” as less predictable form is rather less expected. This utterance therefore implies something different; that is, John could solve the problem, but he did not.

## 2. HEURISTICS IN INTERPRETATION

Having encapsulated the heuristics as suggested by Levinson (1995, 2000), in the following section I should explain how the heuristics apply to interpretation. Each of the heuristics will be explained along with examples from some press conferences. The discussion should mark the interpreter’s selection of what elements to choose from to communicate meaning immediately and effortlessly.

### 2.1 Q-Heuristic

The Q-heuristic requires the speaker not to make weaker utterances than his/her knowledge of the world, and

the hearer to take it by the speaker to have made the strongest statement of what s/he knows. The interpreter shifts roles, first as a hearer, and second as a speaker. As a hearer, s/he should not expect more than what is said by the SM speaker to be the case. As a second speaker, s/he cannot say more than s/he had expected from the SM speaker.

Text 1 below includes some instances compatible with the Q-Heuristic. This text is from a press conference between the former Egyptian President Hussni Mubarak, and the American president Barak Obama. The examples include cases of general vocabulary, number words, quantifiers and functional words. As a point of orientation, we should assume that Mubarak does not provide any statement weaker than his knowledge of the world allows. The interpreter, therefore, takes that the speaker has made the strongest statement that is consistent with the speaker’s world knowledge. Strong and weak forms illuminate our discussion of the applicability of the Q-Heuristic to interpretation. Accordingly, we can claim that interpretation is problematic if the interpreter opts for a weak form of the strong one or vice versa. (Where the interpreter in the examples fails the SL message, this should be pointed out between round brackets).

#### Text 1:

واليوم هي المرة الثالثة (g) التي مع الرئيس اوباما و في البيت الابيض تكلمنا—فتح—ناقشنا (a) مواضيع كثيرة (d) منها العلاقات الثنائية منها القضايا القائمة في منطقة الشرق الاوسط منها القضية الفلسطينية، إيران منها الوضع في منطقة الصومال والقرن الافريقي وفي كل (e) هذه القضايا حتى قضايا العلاقات الخارجية... الاصلاح الموجود في مصر وانا قلت للرئيس بكل صراحة وبطريقة فرندي انا دخلت الانتخابات بناء على اقرار او (g) برنامج هذا البرنامج يشمل الاصلاح يشمل حاجات كثيرة جدا ونحن نقوم بتنفيذها وما زال امامنا سنتين (h) اثنتين لتنفيذ هذا البرنامج. على اي حال العلاقات المصرية الامريكية علاقات طيبة (b) واستراتيجية يمكن احنا ان تركيزنا الاكبر على القضية الفلسطينية لانها قضية محورية لها تاثير (c) على المنطقة كلها.

#### Interpretation:

The **third** (h) time I meet with President Obama is right here at the White House. We have (talk... open...) **discussed** (a) **an array** (d) of issues, from our bilateral relations to the issue of the Middle East, the region, to the Palestinian issue, to the issue of Iran, Somalia and the Africa horn. Also, **several** (e) other issues even we discussed the issue of reform inside Egypt, and I told president Obama very frankly and very friendly that I have entered into the elections based on a **platform** (f) that included reforms we have started to implement and some we still have **two** (g) more years to implement. Our relations between us and the United States are **very good** (b) relations and strategic. We have perhaps focused on the Palestinian issue because it is a pivotal issue. The Palestinian issue has **impact** (c) on the world.

#### Examples of scalar implicature from Text 1:

- (a) We **discussed** many topics (as interpreted).  
☐ not talked about many topics

- (b) The relations between America and Egypt are **good** and strategic  
☐ not very good (as interpreted)  
 (c) It has **impacted** the region (as interpreted)  
☐ not affected  
 (d) We discussed **many** topics  
☐ not an array of topics (as interpreted)  
 (e) **All** these issues  
☐ not several of these issues (as interpreted)  
 (f) I entered into the elections based on a plan **or** a platform (as interpreted)  
☐ not plan and platform  
 (g) We still have **two** years to conclude them (as interpreted)  
☐ not three years to conclude them  
 (h) This is the **third** time I meet with President Obama (as interpreted)  
☐ not the fourth

Example (a) is a case of general vocabulary with strong scales that entail other words with weaker scales.

To be more specific, the verb “to discuss” implicates other verb forms like “to talk” or “to speak”. The cancelling formula “not only W (weak), S (strong)” by Levinson (2000) can apply to test which is which (strong vs. weak) as following: while “not only talked about a number of issues, but also discussed them” is acceptable, “not only discussed a number of issues, but also talked about them” is not. So, by applying the cancelling formula, “to discuss” is the strong form, and “to talk” is the weak form. The interpreter chose the strong form taking the speaker to have made this form consistent with his best knowledge of the world. The word “discuss” should communicate meanings such as “exchange, weigh up, argue for” particular views; such senses are not part of words such as “talk”, or “speak”. In example (b), the interpreter does not show a similar awareness of the strong and weak forms of the adjective form “good”. To test which is which, again, we can apply a similar cancelling formula by Levinson (2000). The formula “W even S” applies as following: The phrase “good even very good” is acceptable; the phrase “very good even good” is not. “Very good” therefore is the strong form, and “good” is the weak form. Therefore, contrary to the speaker’s intention, the message is being exaggerated as very good using the strong form instead of the weak marked form. This, therefore, is not consistent with the speaker’s intention. Here I should point out that has the speaker intended the strong form, he would have used the quantifier “very”. In Arabic, the word “طيبة” (roughly translates as good) is rather neutral. This sense therefore, in the Arabic text, implicates that the relations between Egypt and the U.S. have not yet improved to a natural level given some issues with the previous administrations. The interpretation of example (c) seems more consistent with the Q-Heuristic. In the example, the verbs “affect” and “impact” have a similar scalar implicature. The cancelling formula “W in fact S” by Levinson (2000) applies as following: while the phrase “affected, in fact, impacted” is acceptable, the phrase “impacted, in fact affected” is not. So, “to impact” is the strong form; it communicates meanings like “to firmly affect something”. It also carries senses like “strong” and “forcible” amongst others.

In examples (d) and (e), the quantifiers “many” and “all” could implicate different scales of weak and strong forms. In example (d) the quantifier “an array of” is used for the quantifier “many”. Using Levinson’s (2000) suspending formula “W or even S”, the utterance “an array of, even many topics” seems acceptable, whereas the phrase “many, even an array of topics” is not. The quantifier “many” has been interpreted by using the weaker form “an array of”. The use of “an array of” instead of “many” communicates a less expected meaning. “An array of topics” implicates that the topics vary primarily in terms of kind, and secondarily in terms

of quantity. In the text, there is no indication that most of the listed topics are mainly political. Similarly, in example (e)... “all” and “several” represent another case of scalar implicature as “all” is the strong form, and “several” is the weak one. Applying the suspension test “W if not S” by Levinson (2000), the phrase “several if not many issues” is more acceptable than “many if not several issues”. Again the choice of several as the weak form makes it more marked; it does not presume that the speaker has made the strongest proposition consistent with his knowledge of the world. This makes the hearer implicates other meanings which are not part of the message content as a more marked form.

Morphology is another case of the scalar approach by Levinson (2000) following Horn (1972, 1984). Some cases are the closed class of linking words and the grammatical inflections that indicate tenses. A case of linking words from the press conference between Mubarak and Obama is given in example (f) as a more consistent interpretation with the Q-Heuristic. In this example, the connective “or” is inclusive; that is it communicates the strong form “and”. For example, “all monkeys are mean or all buffalos are brave” implicates that “one or the other, or both” (Briner, 2013). In example (f), “plan or platform” implicates “plan or platform, or both plan and platform”. Following this argument, the linking “or” is the strong form and the linking “and” is the weak form. The choice of “or” as the strong form is consistent with the speaker’s world knowledge; hence the interpretation is more accurate. Therefore, to interpret example (f) as “plan and platform” using the weak form “and” is less accurate.

A similar kind of argument can be applied to number words and numerical expressions in examples (g) and (h). Consecutively, the number “two” and the numerical expression “third time” entail meanings like “at least two years” and “at least the third time”. Such forms therefore are not supposed to be problematic if noted accurately by the interpreter.

The Q-Heuristic marks the highest stage of informative communication. Not applying this principle could mislead the audience by a faulty message. For example, in Text 2, the Palestinian President Abbas and the former British Prime Minister Brown held a press conference in London in 2008. What is not said was the case in a number of utterances. The Arabic word “مصمومون” (determined) was relayed once as “emphasized” and another time as “sured (sic)”. This is a violation of the Q-Heuristic. The word “determine” has weaker forms like “decide”. It implicates meanings, amongst others, like “firm, decisive, forceful decisions”. “Emphasized” on the other hand does not implicate similar senses; it has completely different weaker forms. For example if you emphasize something, then you make it more prominent amongst other similar things.

In another example from Text 2, President Abbas only talked about Britain's support to the Palestinian Authority, not to the Palestinian people as was reported in the interpretation. This leads to different kinds of meaning processing with unwanted, sometimes unwarranted consequences. West Bank and Gaza Strip are controlled by two factions that have different ideological orientations. The Palestinian Authority controls the West bank; it is predominantly controlled by the secular Fatah organization. Gaza Strip is controlled by Hamas; a sect of the Moslem Brotherhood that controlled The Strip after the military coup in 2006. The Palestinian people and Palestinian authority have whole-

part or strong-weak forms relationship. The relationship between the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people is inclusive if the later is representative of the former; this enjoins a logical form like *A or B, or both A and B*. This kind of interpretation is most likely by the audience who are affiliated with Fateh faction that controls the West Bank. The other interpretation where the relationship between the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority is exclusive (either A or B, not A and B) is most likely by people who are affiliated with Hamas that controls Gaza Strip. Therefore, the interpreter has no choice but to translate what is as is following the Q-Heuristic.

## Text 2:

وثانيا اود ان اشكركم على الدعم الذي قدمته بريطانيا من اجل دعم السلطة الفلسطينية... ونحن مصممون على الوصول الى سلام عادل في عام 2008

I would like also to thank you for **the generous support that you have been giving to Palestinian people** and the Authority ... We are **emphasizing** and we are **sure** (sic) that we will reach an agreement hopefully in 2008.

## 2.2 The I-Heuristic

The I-Heuristic is both speaker- and listener-based. The speaker minimizes the utterance to its minimal units, and the listener expands it again. The interpreter has to perform both tasks; as a listener, s/he knows what the intended meaning is through a process of maximization of language meaning. As a speaker, s/he renders the

message by compacting its meaning in form of minimal units into the TL. The message by the interpreter as a second speaker, following Levinson (2000), should be specific, minimal, stereotypical and informative. This requires that the interpreter expands the message as a first hearer and compresses it again as a second speaker. The enrichment of the message as rendered in the TL should be automatic and immediate by the second hearer or the audience of the conference. Consider the examples (a) to (c) from the conferences between Mubarak and Obama (Text 1 above), and between the British Prime Minister David Cameron and the Egyptian President al-Sissi (Text 3 below):

## Text 3

شكرا فخامة رئيس مجلس الوزراء السيدات والسادة اسمحو لي في البدايه اوجه الشكر والتقدير لدولة رئيس الوزراء البريطاني على الاجواء الايجابية التي تسود هذه الزياره وعلى حفاوة الاستقبال والكرم الضيافه (a) التي يبديها الجانب البريطاني زيارتي للملكة المتحدة تعكس قوة العلاقات التي تربط بين البلدين والشعبين. انكم تتفقون (c) معي على ان علاقات التعاون الوثيقه التي تجمع فيما بيننا في مجالات شتى تمثل اساسا متيناً لنتيح لنا في المستقبل القريب من تطوير العلاقات السياسية والاقتصاديّه وتدعيم شراكه تجاريه واستثماريه واسعه النطاق... ، ولاشك أننا من خلال المشاورات (b) سنحقق فهماً أكبر

## Interpretation:

Thank you Mr Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen. As well as the **hospitality** (a) and the welcome we have received from Britain.

My visit to the UK clearly reflects the **strong relations** between the two countries and peoples. I **think you agree** (c) with me that our **close cooperation** in the various fields lays the sound foundation for more rigorous dynamics politically and economically, as well as trade and investment partnership at a wider scale... **No doubt we have come out from these talks (b) with better understanding.**

## Examples:

- (a) I thank you for the hospitality.  
+ > your hospitality to us
- (b) Through consultations, we have come to better understanding  
+ > consultations between us
- (c) Our relations between us and the United States (as interpreted) (Text 1).

Examples (a) and (b) are cases of co-referencing. In example (a), the utterance "I thank you for the hospitality and the positive atmosphere" undergoes enrichment and expansion by the interpreter as a first

hearer as following: "I (president al Sissi) thank you (President Cameron, British delegation) for your (Cameron's, the British delegation's) hospitality (to me and my delegation)." Similarly, example (b) "through consultations, we have come to better understanding" is expanded as "through consultations (between us, al Sissi and Cameron) we (both of us) have come to better understanding (about the concerned issues)". Such expanded processing is compressed by the interpreter as a second speaker, and then expanded again upon the rendition of the message by the TL audience. Applying this principle saves the interpreter extra processing of the message meaning to avoid redundancy and information load. In example (c), however, the interpreter performs the first phase of the message processing (enrichment), but fails to compact the message upon rendition. The utterance "العلاقات المصرية الامريكية" (literally: The Egyptian-American relations) was interpreted as "Our relations between us and the United States". The failure to apply this principle which is supposed to be automatic results in a more detailed and unnecessary processing of information and ends as a more redundant utterance.

### 2.3 The M principle

This principle advises interpreters to consider marked utterances and amount of information as indicators to marked situations. Marked forms according to Levinson (2000) have two sides: the formal side and the meaning side. On the formal side they are morphologically complex, less lexicalized, prolix, less frequent and less neutral. On the meaning sides, they have additional meaning or connotation that does not exist in their unmarked counterparts. The heuristic according to Levinson (2000) relates to Grice's maxim of manner; more particularly the sub-maxim "avoid prolixity". More prolix utterances as a case of flouting this sub-maxim increases the markedness of the utterance. Therefore the interpreter should communicate the same amount of information as in the SM to help the TL hearers to enjoin similar implicature. In particular cases a speaker emphasizes a point by giving more information than seems required in form of moves or additional chunks of information. In Text 1 above, Mubarak mentioned a number of topics he discussed with Obama as the parliamentary elections in Egypt. This topic is followed by 5 moves, unlike the other topics in the same utterance. Mubarak mentioned the platform (a) and made the word "pledge" appear synonymous (b); he remarked to the changes included in this platform (c), emphasized

that the government is working on some reforms (d) and pointed that the government still needs more two years to finish them (e). This markedness through the amount of information has implications if we consider the political context of the conference. The meeting with Obama came just before the spark of the "Arab Spring" in Tunisia and after the controversial parliamentary and presidential elections in Egypt. Thus, the talk about reform with prolixity has a calming or sedative effect, particularly a message to the Egyptian people who started to feel unrest because of corruption, inequality and the rule of the military. What is considerable about this example is the interpreter failing the same amount of information in this utterance and thus missing the desired effect it has.

Another example to explain prolixity as a case of markedness is the press conference between the American president Barak Obama and the Iraqi prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in Text 4 below. Again to understand the example, we need to consider the political context of the meeting. In the war against ISIL (the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant), there was a mention of the Shiite Popular Mobilization Forces in the midst of the controversy about the role of the Iraqi Forces in the war against ISIL. The Popular Forces are almost exclusively Shiites who were redeployed to stop ISIL from controlling more Iraqi territories. The Popular Mobilization Forces in the war against ISIL were accused of being sectarian and committing crimes against the Sunnis of Iraq under the pretext of fighting ISIL. In the example the mention of Popular Mobilization Forces seemed rather coincidental. However, with prolixity, this communicates a different function. Al-Abadi was talking about the battle of Ramadi. Exclusively, his mention of the Popular Forces was supplemented with four moves as follows: they are "under the control of the State (a)" and "under the control of the general chief of the Iraqi forces (b)" "completely (c)" and "now (d)". Prolixity in this case implicates a message to President Obama and the Iraqi people that the Popular Forces have legitimacy as part of the Iraqi Army. The Iraqi prime minister was trying to change a previous misconception or defy an implicit claim about the role of such forces in the war against ISIL. This message was not clear in the TM. The interpretation was not upgraded to the same extent as the SM. Besides, the interpreter failed to indicate that the moves are made to give legitimacy to the Popular Mobilization Forces only, not, as in the interpretation, the Iraqi forces and the Popular Mobilization Forces together.

#### Text 4:

احنا خضنا ونخوض عدة معارك ضد داعش ... واحدة من هذه المعارك ... في كل هذه المعارك نحن ربنا الجوله مع داعش ولكن واحده منها هي الرمادي وخسرنا بس انا اقول ان شاءالله مؤقتا بعد الرمادي القوات العراقية من ضمنها الحشد الشعبي اللي هي تحت سيطرة القائد العام للقوات المسلحة وتحت سيطرة الدولة العراقية الان بالكامل اعد مرة اخرى اخذ زمام المبادرة وتم تحرير مساحات من الارض تعادل عدة اضعاف من مساحة الرمادي.

### Interpretation:

We are fighting several fights and combats against ISIL. We have won rounds against ISIL. One round we lost was in Ramadi, but I say that we lost it only temporarily and the Iraqi Security Forces and the Popular Mobilization Forces all **under the leadership of the commander in chief and the leadership of the Iraqi government** has taken control of the situation and are endeavoring very hard to liberate all the land in Iraq that is confiscated.

Other examples of markedness are given in Text 3 (above) and Text 5 (below) in form of repetitive semantic and lexical items. Such forms are used to emphasize a message; therefore they are heavier and longer than

### Text 5:

مازلنا ولا زال شعبنا الفلسطيني يتذكر بكل اعتزاز والتقدير زيارتكم التاريخية (e) التي قمتم بها الى الاراضي الفلسطينية والتي منها بدانا اطلاق المفاوضات بدعمكم ومساعدتكم زمساعدة السيد جون كيري

### Interpretation:

We still and our people still remember very proudly the **historical visit** (e) that you paid to the Palestinian territories after of which peace negotiations with your support and help and also with the involvement of Mr Kerry.

The choice of emphatic forms in form of heavy utterances in the examples (a) to (e) above is reiterative. Using the M-Heuristic, they all communicate a sense of unexpectedness through upgrading or negating the neutral, less marked and more expected forms like “ordinary”, “normal”, “separable”, “shakable” and “forgettable”. Such forms are rhetorical and persuasive with a function to invoke emotions by the audience to achieve the intended discourse goals as planned by the SM speaker. According to Jawad, (2009, p.736) “rhetorical repetition can be considered an extra structure, extra layer, or extra regularity aimed at triggering extra meanings as well as organizing the overall composition of discourse”. Jawad suggests different strategies to translate repetition like reduction, repetition, omission etc. Here I will not argue for their applicability as good or bad strategies; however I find myself inclined to follow a similar argument about the feasibility of translation theory in relevance to Levinson’s heuristics similar to Gutt (1989). Translators according to this account should gear the TL audience to the maximization of optimal relevance to communicate the speaker’s intended meaning.

## CONCLUSION

This study triggers interpretation as an act of communication. It establishes for an act of interpretation characterized with immediacy, conventionality and effortlessness. The study applied Levinson’s (1995, 2000) heuristics, namely the Q, I and M heuristics. From the examples, the Q-Heuristic stipulates that an interpreter chooses the forms that are more consistent with the speaker’s

expected (cf. Dickens et al., 2013). Some examples as I interpreted are:

- (a) Hearty reception  
+ > extraordinary reception
- (b) Generous hospitality  
+ > abnormal hospitality
- (c) Tight relations that combine both of us  
+ > inseparable relations
- (d) Firm foundations  
+ > unshakable foundations
- (e) We still remember with gratitude and appreciation your last historical visit  
+ > unforgettable visit

knowledge of the world unless otherwise is stated. A scalar approach according to Levinson (1995, 2000) following Horn (1972, 1984) was used to examine some instances of vocabulary, morphology and linking words from a number of interpreted press conferences. The cases do not show much consistency according to the Q-Heuristics as some strong forms are replaced by weak forms and vice versa. The shift between strong and weak forms ends with a completely or partially different message with a different implicature. The I-Heuristic advocates that a linguistic form should be simply described through default maximization and compression. The interpreter according to the I-heuristic should expand the message as simply stated upon comprehension and compress it again upon rendition. The examples in the study show some instances compatible with the I-Heuristics; others that are less consistent with the I-Heuristic implicate different a meaning from what is intended. Extra information and unconventional choice of words mainly implicate reiterative, emotive, and persuasive functions. The interpreter should be sensitive to any extra regularity in the message form as this implicates a level of markedness and therefore meaning unconventionality. Thus, the amount of information or message prolixity should be marked in a very similar way to communicate similar functions.

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